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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 002822

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/SE, SA

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [TU](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN AND PRTS: TURKS SET ON TAKHAR

REF: ANKARA 2736 AND PREVIOUS

(U) Classified by Ambassador Eric S. Edelman. Reasons: 1.5
(B and D).

1. (C) On the margins of a meeting on Cyprus (septel), MFA U/S Ziyal reiterated to Ambassador and UK Ambassador Westmacott that Turkey is committed to establishing a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Takhar and is not considering alternative locations.

2. (C) UK Amb. Westmacott opened the discussion on Afghanistan by observing there were a number of confusing messages on priority desired locations for new PRTs. He noted there were security holes in Afghanistan that needed to be filled, and NATO was worried. Westmacott also acknowledged that Turkey is providing three helicopters for ISAF.

3. (C) Ziyal said Turkey was planning on deploying the 3rd Corps in Istanbul to Afghanistan from February to August 2005 when they expect the NATO HRF to assume command of ISAF. 1,500 troops would be deployed, and the GOT already had provided PM Erdogan a cost estimate. Ziyal added that Turkey was prepared to establish a PRT where it would be useful. Westmacott said that new PRTs were needed in the West and the South, not in Takhar. Ziyal said there were a number of good reasons why it made sense for Turkey to establish a PRT in Takhar, including logistics, familiarity with the region, and ease of communication with the local population. In particular, they were concerned about their traditionally poor relations with Pushtuns, which suggested that it would be better if Turkey worked with other ethnic groups. Ziyal acknowledged sensitivities about Turkey working with Dostum.

4. (C) Amb. Edelman noted that the PRT Executive Steering Committee (ESC) in Kabul had produced a map identifying priority locations for new PRTs. He suggested Turkey review the map. Ziyal replied that Turkey needed to establish a PRT where it felt it will be most useful. He expressed the concern that otherwise, the PRT would be "counterproductive" to Turkey's other efforts in Afghanistan and undermine future Turkish contributions.

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